

Ej News

A newsletter from the EPA
New England Environmental
Justice Council



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Massachusetts signs one of the strongest EJ policies in the nation

On Oct. 9, among the trees and park benches of Roxbury's newly restored Orchard Park, and surrounded by community members, and local, state and federal officials, Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs, Bob Durand, signed a new statewide policy on environmental justice.

The policy strengthens the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' (EOEA) commitment to ensure that EJ is an "integral consideration" in all EOEA efforts,

including awarding of grant funding, enforcement and implementation of regulations and policies, and the accessibility of the state's open space. Targeting low-income, minority, foreign-born and non-English speaking residents, the new EJ policy will enhance involvement opportunities for targeted populations and ensure equal access to state environmental resources.

Under the policy, EOEA defines EJ as the equal protection and

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Rhode Island Transit Authority agrees to reduce bus pollution emissions by 90 percent in EPA settlement

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) agreed in October to pay a \$75,000 penalty and make substantive changes to its bus fleet as part of an enforcement case settlement with EPA's New England office.

The agreement stems from EPA inspections in 1999 that showed numerous violations of hazardous waste management laws, as well as the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, at RIPTA's bus maintenance and repair facility at 265 Melrose Street in Providence.

In addition to paying the penalty, RIPTA has agreed to operate its entire diesel-powered fleet on ultra-low sulfur fuel, reducing diesel particulate (soot) emissions by about 20 percent. The agreement requires RIPTA to use this fuel until 2006, at which time federal regulation will require all highway diesel fuel to be ultra-low sulfur fuel containing less than 15 parts per million of sulfur.

RIPTA also agreed to install diesel particulate filters on all 156

of its diesel-fueled buses, further reducing diesel particulate emissions by about 70 percent for a total reduction of 90 percent. RIPTA has agreed to finish installing the filters by July 2006. The U.S. Department of Transportation has agreed to fund 80 percent of the \$1.2 million cost of this retrofit project.

According to the 1999 inspections, RIPTA was not making required hazardous waste

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On a mission to institutionalize EJ principles at EPA New England

A message from James M. Younger, Director of the Office of Civil Rights & Urban Affairs

EPA New England recently released its new *EJ Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2003*, an ambitious plan that aims to institutionalize environmental justice principles throughout all of the region's programs and activities. The plan continues and enhances many of the activities and approaches begun under the region's *EJ Action Plan for Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002*, that was made possible by the strong support of EPA New England's Regional Administrator Robert W. Varney, Deputy Regional Administrator Ira Leighton and the EJ Council, which is comprised of the regional EJ Coordinator and the Deputy Office Directors and staff from each of the six program and administrative offices in the region. The National Program Director for Environmental Justice, Barry Hill, was also instrumental in ensuring a continuing focus on EJ throughout the country by requiring all 10 regional offices to submit similar EJ action plans for the 2003 fiscal year.

As chair for the EJ Council, I have a passion to see that all of the EPA New England staff possess sound knowledge and understanding of the principles of environmental justice and how to apply them in their everyday work.

EPA New England has made and continues to make an extraordinary commitment to institutionalize EJ. The Deputy Office Directors have been assigned management accountability and responsibility for this effort, and they attend biweekly meetings of the EJ Council and chair the six subcommittees outlined within the EJ action plan: Communication, Internal Organizational Engagement and Training, External Stakeholder Engagement, Inventory, Mapping and Program

Evaluation. The region supports a full-time EJ Coordinator and EJ Specialist within the Office of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, and has also made the region's highly successful and unique Urban Environmental Initiative a permanent program. The Urban Environmental



James M. Younger, the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Program consist of a Team Leader and staff working directly with citizens in targeted urban areas to build partnerships and community capacity to identify and resolve a multitude of EJ-related issues.

EPA New England began offering EJ training this past March to ensure that all staff have a fundamental understanding of EJ, especially the main principles of fair treatment, meaningful involvement and public health protection. The region is also providing a continuing series of short and long term EJ-related learning and educational opportunities for staff. I firmly believe that by

ensuring our staff comprehend EJ principles, EPA New England will be able to protect the environment and health for future generations and of all New England's citizens—especially those who do not have the time, resources or political clout to get some very basic quality of life issues addressed and resolved.

While there may still be lingering questions by community members regarding EPA's ability to address and resolve many of the issues they deem to be important, it is quite clear to me that EPA New England has a strong commitment and very successful track record in building partnerships with and throughout the communities of New England. However I do not believe that we can rest on our past accomplishments, and must aggressively move forward with a renewed commitment to engage external stakeholders in meaningful and purposeful dialogues to develop new strategies to resolve their issues.

The most significant factor for our continued and future success is the implementation of our regional EJ Action Plan, which contains many strategies to allow EPA New England to address and resolve new and emerging EJ issues, and continue our efforts to build better and improved partnerships with community-based organizations and other federal, state, municipal and tribal governments. I encourage all EPA employees and interested stakeholders to familiarize themselves with the new *EJ Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2003* that is outlined on the following page and join me in our continuing mission to institutionalize EJ principles at EPA New England.

New EPA New England Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2003 released

In October, EPA New England released its new *EJ Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2003*. Beginning this fiscal year, all regional EPA offices were required to submit similar plans to the EPA's national Office of Environmental Justice. OEJ modeled the template for the action plans after EPA New England's original plan for the previous two fiscal years.

One of EPA New England's highest and most challenging priorities is to promote environmental justice to ensure that the citizens of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont all enjoy an equal level of environmental protection. EPA New England acknowledges that, notwithstanding differences in race, color, national origin and income, everyone strives for a better quality of life, including a safer and healthier living environment for their family, community and future generations. Many minority and low-income communities may not have the access or resources to get their concerns addressed, even when they suffer a disproportionate impact from environmental pollution or public health concerns.

EPA New England recognizes that it must increase its involvement and attention to minority and low-income communities, and the new *EJ Action Plan* outlines concrete, measurable steps to accomplish this. The new plan continues many of the strategies that were initiated over the last two years, including the region's focus on communication, internal organizational engagement and training, external stakeholder engagement and evaluation. Two new strategies included in this year's plan outline EPA New England's desktop EJ Inventory of each program and administrative office's EJ-related

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Office Notes

EPA New England assumes EJ lead region responsibilities

In October, EPA New England became the lead region for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance programs, including EJ, for the next two years. The lead region provides feedback and policy direction to EPA headquarters, and is responsible for coordinating national conference calls, meetings, seminars and budget responses. As lead region for environmental justice, EPA New England has the opportunity to contribute and be a leader in policy and implementation work to further the agency's efforts to promote environmental justice.

Fall farewells

Summer has slipped by and we have had to say good-bye to a great group of summer interns. Nick Benjamin is back at Middlebury College in Vermont, David Halbert returned to the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and David McBride returned to Morehouse College in Georgia. We are fortunate to have co-op student Yvette Mitchell and Environmental Careers Organization intern Julianne Pardi still with us in the Office of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, where they both juggle a variety of responsibilities while they are finishing up master's degrees at Tufts University and Boston University, respectively. Former ECO intern Nathan Brooks continues in the Office of Environmental Stewardship where he is working on hazards analysis in areas of environmental justice concern for credit at Framingham State University. Last, but certainly not least, ECO intern Ryan Torres, a master's student at Tufts University, joined the Urban Environmental Program team in August and is helping coordinate several environmental justice-related regional listening sessions scheduled for next year.

Course reminder: Working Effectively with Tribal Governments

EPA New England employees—if you are involved with environmental issues on or potentially impacting Indian lands, do not forget to register for the two-day workshop on Working Effectively With Tribal Governments on Nov. 20 and 21. The first day will cover tribal concepts, American Indian history, federal Indian law and EPA tribal initiatives. The course will also feature a special presentation of native artifacts uncovered during a Superfund project in Maine. The second day will focus on cultural orientation. Do not miss this great opportunity to learn more about New England tribes! Register through START.

National Office of Environmental Justice turns 10

On Wednesday, Nov. 20, EPA's national Office of Environmental Justice will hold a program called "Moving Forward: Environmental Protection for All" to celebrate its 10th anniversary. The event will highlight some of the agency's significant contributions to address environmental justice issues and effectively integrate environmental justice in EPA policies, programs and activities. The program will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ariel Rios Building's Rachel Carson Great Hall on the third floor, and will feature remarks from Deputy Administrator Linda Fisher, EPA New England Regional Administrator Robert W. Vamey and other senior managers, followed by a reception. All EPA employees are welcome to attend. Contact Marla Hendriksson at 202-564-1897 or hendriksson.marla@epa.gov for more information or special accommodations.

NAPA reports on EJ in EPA permitting and state government

The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) issued two EJ-related reports in the last year per the request of the national EPA Office of Environmental Justice. The reports, entitled *Environmental Justice in EPA Permitting: Reducing Pollution in High-Risk Communities is Integral to the Agency's Mission* and *Models for Change: Efforts by Four States to Address Environmental Justice*, both concern the integration of environmental justice principles into everyday practices. To obtain a copy of either of the NAPA reports, visit <http://38.217.229.6/NAPA/NAPAPubs.nsf?OpenDatabase>.

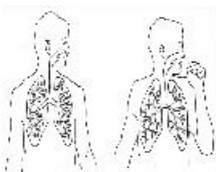
Pediatric disease of environmental origin: a hefty price tag

According to a study conducted and released by Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York, childhood diseases of environmental origin are estimated to cost the U.S. nearly \$55 billion annually. The study, entitled *Environmental Pollutants and Disease in American Children*, looked at lead poisoning, asthma, childhood cancer and developmental disabilities. The study was the first in the country to assess the cost of pediatric diseases stemming from exposure to environmental toxins.

The study suggests that inadequate testing of chemicals that children are exposed to is one of

the factors that contributes to the high cost of pediatric disease. The problem is expected to worsen if more research is not devoted to this issue. One of the study's lead researchers suggested that the situation be addressed by investing more resources in research, disease tracking, testing of chemicals and pediatrician training to recognize diseases with environmental causes.

Additional information on this report can be obtained by contacting Lucia Lee at Lucia.lee@mountsinai.org or by calling 212-241-9200.



Reports document disproportionate occurrence of asthma among low-income and minority populations

Two reports released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control this year noted that the burden of asthma is borne disproportionately by low-income and minority populations. An article by the CDC's Infant and Child Health Studies Branch in the August issues of *Pediatrics* concluded that the burden of childhood asthma may have recently plateaued after several years of increasing, but African American children continue to bear a disproportionate burden from asthma and racial and ethnic disparities remain large for asthma health care utilization and mortality. In last March's issue of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, the CDC noted that asthma remains a serious problem for millions of Americans, particularly low-income and minority populations, despite a recent leveling off of hospitalization and death rates.

"Severe asthma continues to affect a disproportionate number of poor, minority and inner-city populations," the CDC's Director of the National Center for Environmental

Health, Richard Jackson, said in a newspaper interview.

The reports indicated that since 1980, asthma death rates have been at least twice as high for African Americans than whites. The most recently documented rates from 1999 indicate that 38.7 per thousand African Americans, versus 14.2 per thousand Caucasians, died of asthma.

The annual rate of hospitalizations from asthma as the first-listed diagnosis rose sharply among African Americans—from 27.0 per thousand in 1980, to 40.7 per thousand in 1995. Recent hospitalization rates have leveled off to the 35.6 hospitalizations per thousand reported in 1999. Similarly, rates of deaths of African Americans with asthma as the underlying cause rose sharply from 27.6 per thousand in 1980 to 48.0 per thousand in 1996, but have since leveled down to 38.7 per thousand in 1999.

For further information, see www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5101a1.htm#tab7 and www.pediatrics.org/cgi/reprint/110/2/315.pdf.

Details of New EJ Action Plan

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activities and a new regional mapping tool being developed to identify potential areas of EJ concern. The *EJ Action Plan's* six independent, yet interrelated, strategies are designed to:

- Improve communication about EJ activities throughout the region via internet, intranet and a quarterly newsletter.
- Engage internal EPA staff in mandatory EJ training and a variety of other EJ-focused learning events.
- Provide guidance and training for staff on public involvement; mapping potential areas of EJ concern; program authorization and delegation; performance partnership agreements; permitting; grants and contracts; waste site cleanup, emergency response and Brownfields; and inspection, enforcement and assistance.
- Remain actively involved and engaged with our external stakeholders through continued dialogue, community capacity-building, and partnerships with federal, state and local agencies to solve environmental justice problems.
- Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our the plan.
- Improve our data collection and management with the implementation of the updated EJ Inventory.
- Provide our staff with a state-of-the-art desktop mapping tool that will equip them to easily identify potential EJ areas of concern and incorporate EJ principles into their daily work at EPA New England.

Each strategy identifies activities for the fiscal year, specific time frames, performance measures and lead contacts. The plans will be reviewed by OEJ, and the national EPA Environmental Justice Steering Committee has established an accountability workgroup that will review and evaluate the progress of each region's plan. For more information, please contact Kathy Castagna, EPA New England's EJ Coordinator, at 617-918-1429.

GAO report weighs benefits and risks of siting industrial facilities in residential areas

At the request of Congress, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report weighing the economic benefits of industrial facilities granted permits from the federal government to operate in residential areas. The report, "Community Investment: Information on Selected Facilities that Received Environmental Permits," was released in May of this year.

Congress requested the report because of the "charge that the facilities expose the surrounding communities – generally low-income Hispanic and African-American communities – to greater environmental risk than the general population." Industries have countered by stating that they bolster local economies by providing jobs to local residents as well as other local services, such as improving infrastructure and schools.

GAO was asked by Congress to study how facilities influence their surrounding communities in terms of: the number and type of jobs provided; contributions to local communities; effects on local property values; and amount and type of government subsidies or incentive packages facilities received. The 15 facilities addressed in the report covered a broad spectrum of media, including nine nonhazardous waste-related facilities (waste-transfer, fertilization production and incineration), three hazardous waste disposal facilities, two chemical plants and one concrete plant. The North Meadow Municipal Landfill in Hartford, Conn., was the only facility located in New England that was evaluated in the report. The City of Hartford owns the landfill, which is run by the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority. Each of the facilities selected had complaints filed against them by residents in surrounding communities.

According to the report, the number of full-time employees at the facilities ranged from four to 103 per facility, with nine of the facilities employing 25 or fewer full-time staff. The North Meadow Municipal Landfill reported employing 4 full-time employees at its facility in

2001. Salaries among all of the facilities ranged from \$15,000 to \$80,000 per year, depending on the type of work and facility location. The facilities would not detail the number of people hired at each salary level or number of employees hired from the community.

Some contributions that the facilities made to their communities included: volunteer work (e.g., organizing cleanups); infrastructure improvements (e.g., installing a new water drainage system); financial assistance to schools, universities, community groups and other organizations; and establishing a fund to manage financial contributions. Yet the report also noted that community residents often felt that facilities' contributions did not adequately address their concerns.

According to the report, the North Meadow Municipal Landfill has committed \$9.7 million over the next 10 years for an Economic Development Account to assist minority business enterprises, social welfare and public health projects, environmental education and community revitalization efforts and

other charitable purposes within Hartford. A board of community groups and city representatives is responsible for distributing funds. The establishment of the account settled the Organized North Easterners and Clay Hill and North End's complaint with the EPA against the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection regarding the landfill's expansion.

While the facilities' effect on property values in the communities was a primary concern to Congress and residents alike, information was not available to determine that relationship in most communities. In the two communities where information was available—in Genesee Township, Mich., and South Bronx, N.Y. – it was not specific enough to directly associate changes in property values with the facilities' operation.

Copies of the report, GAO-02-479, can be obtained through GAO's website at www.gao.gov by writing to the U.S. General Accounting Office, 441 G Street NW, Room LM Washington, D.C. 20548, or by calling 202-512-6000.

NEJAC seeks public input for upcoming pollution prevention meeting

The annual National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) meeting, originally slated for July, is now scheduled for Dec. 9-12 in Baltimore. This year's NEJAC meeting will focus on the question: Is there a relationship between pollution prevention, waste minimization initiatives and the issue of environmental justice?

NEJAC is a federal advisory committee to the EPA comprised of EJ stakeholders, including representatives from academia, community groups, environmental organizations, industries, and state, local and tribal governments, who provide independent recommendations to the agency.

A new NEJAC workgroup will present a report and additional external recommendations to the EPA that explore how the agency and stakeholders can collaborate to integrate pollution

prevention measures into industrial practices and reduce environmental impacts on communities.

The workgroup preparing the report is seeking input from all stakeholders, and by answering the following questions you can help focus the meeting:

- Do you think pollution prevention can be useful in your community and, if so, how?
- Can you provide examples of successful pollution prevention efforts?
- Can you provide examples of any barriers that exist to pollution prevention?

Please send your answers to king.marva@epamail.epa.gov or Charles Lee, Associate Director of the Office of Environmental Justice, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20460.

All mandatory EJ training now includes a site to



Since July, all EPA New England employees participating in the required 1½-day Environmental Justice (EJ) Awareness course have been treated to a site tour. Previously, only the more intense three-day EJ Fundamentals course included a site tour. The region recently redesigned the training to only offer employees the EJ Awareness course, which has been modified to include one day of classroom instruction and a half-day tour of a potential EJ area of concern—typically led by a partner community-based organization.

The first EJ Awareness course to incorporate such a tour was held in July at the agency's new laboratory in North Chelmsford, Mass. The day began with a four-hour tour through the nearby city of Lawrence. Before the standard classroom training began, the trainees saw firsthand what they would be learning about in the classroom a few hours later. Visiting sites such as Den Rock Park, the Lawrence Industrial Park, Pemberton Park and Family Services, the former Ogden Martin incinerator site and a community garden, the group of 22 EPA employees learned about potential environmental justice concerns, adding flesh to the bones of EJ Awareness training.

Last summer's tour was led by Tennis Lilly, Executive Director of the Lawrence Grassroots Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining projects that address environmental, social and economic justice in the community. Beginning at Den Rock Park, Lilly introduced the group to the only natural green space in the city. Lilly explained that the 120 acres of forest, swamp, waterway and wildlife were rescued from developers after a five-year struggle. Continuing on to Lawrence Industrial Park, the group saw an area where various industries are concentrated along the Merrimack River. The area is home to both Crown Cork and Seal, the sixth largest licensed volatile organic compound (VOC) emitter in the state, and Adtec Electroplating, cited by the EPA for violating the Clean Air Act

as well as federal laws regulating hazardous waste.

The tour stopped next at Pemberton Park, home of Family Services Inc., and the Casa de Salud project. Pemberton Park, a waterside green space, is being rehabilitated and expanded by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management and will soon provide an esplanade-like setting for Lawrence residents, according to Lilly. At Family Services, Doris Anciani, the head of the Casa de Salud project, explained the organization's research and education efforts to raise awareness of the health impacts of environmental toxins and to engage Latino residents in mitigating these impacts. The objective of the organization is to demonstrate the effectiveness of neighborhood home-based meetings to educate the public about environmental issues.

Anciani spoke of various rituals in Afro-Caribbean and Central American communities that use mercury to bring good fortune. The mercury is easily attainable at local botanicas (specialty herb stores), and is ingested through capsules, heated and inhaled or sprinkled on objects. At high doses, mercury exposure can cause tremors, inability to walk, convulsions and even death. At levels more commonly seen in the United States, the mercury exposure effects documented include more subtle—yet still serious—damage to the senses and brain. The developing fetus is the most sensitive to the effects of mercury, and so women of childbearing age are the population of greatest concern.

Anciani said another major public health concern is local residents' exposure to VOC emissions from auto body shops and other companies. VOCs are released from burning fuel (gasoline, oil, wood coal, natural gas, etc.), solvents, paints, glues and other products used at work or at home. VOCs include chemicals such as benzene, toluene, dimethylene chloride and methyl chloroform, and many VOCs are hazardous air pollutants that can cause serious health problems such as cancer and very serious illnesses. Anciani said that workers in Lawrence often do not

know of the risks of dealing with VOCs, much less how to protect themselves. VOCs also aid in the formation of smog, which causes breathing problems, reduced lung function, asthma, eye irritation, congestion, reduced resistance to colds and other infections and may speed up aging of lung tissue.

At the next stop on the tour, the former Ogden Martin Waste Energy Facility, the group learned about abandoned textile mills and dye works, among other industries, that once operated there. The Arlington neighborhood, which is the poorest and most densely populated community in Lawrence, is located right over the fence behind the facility. The Ogden Martin large municipal waste combustion facility closed in 1998 because retrofitting the equipment to reduce acid gas emissions (sulfur dioxide, hydrogen chloride, and nitrogen oxides), metal emissions (mercury, lead, cadmium, and particulate matter) and organic emissions (dioxin/furans and carbon monoxide) proved too costly. Lilly said the previous owners did not want to associate themselves with these industries due to asbestos, lead, PCB and creosote floor contamination.

The next-to-final stop was the Spruce Street Community Garden, which was created on a vacant lot in the Arlington neighborhood. There are over 700 vacant lots in Lawrence, and the Spruce Street Garden is an example of how neighborhoods can revitalize such an area to increase and utilize open space. Lilly cautioned that soils in Lawrence may have elevated mercury and lead levels, a problem that can be remedied in community gardens with raised beds of clean soil.

The group wound down its tour of Lawrence at the former LGI office and the Bernstein Bookstore, located at 468 Essex Street. LGI is presently looking for a new space to operate.

"Everybody knows where Lawrence is, but we got in and poked around where one wouldn't normally go," said Arthur Clark of EPA's Drinking Water Program, noting that the tour was enormously rewarding.

Chelsea Comparative Risk Assessment identifies scientific gaps in community

The Chelsea Creek Community-Based Risk Assessment (CRA), a two-year collaborative project between the Chelsea Creek Action Group (CCAG), the EPA New England office and the Greater Boston Urban Resource Partnership, recently drew to a close. Unlike traditional risk assessments, where the research objectives, goals and priorities are predetermined, this project based its priorities on what the *community* deemed to be its most critical issues.

Researchers went directly to the residents along the Chelsea Creek, a 2.6 mile long waterway that connects the city of Chelsea and the community of East Boston, Mass., to determine which environmental, public health and quality of life issues were most important to them.

The Creek is a Coastal Zone Management Designated Port Area, which allows for marine industrial uses. The Creek supports commercial, industrial and residential activities. The area is home to a large number of jet fuel tanks which supply the nearby Boston Logan International Airport, other fuel storage tanks

for a multitude of industrial and commercial enterprises, a multi-ton salt pile, and abandoned and contaminated properties. With all of these uses along the Creek, residents have limited access to the waterfront and may be exposed to associated environmental and public health risks.

Instead of conducting isolated research to assess the extent of these potential environmental and public health risks apart from the community – the CRA project involved residents in decision-making throughout the duration of the project. Residents were also charged with the task of identifying action steps that individuals, community groups and the government could work on to address existing issues.

Community activists from the Neighborhood of Affordable Housing and the Chelsea Greenspace and Recreation Committee have been working together for many years to improve the quality of life for Chelsea and East Boston residents. Collectively, these two groups form the CCAG, which undertook the CRA project in

order to involve residents in and inform residents about their community. In the initial stages of the project, a coordinating committee was established to help design a work plan for the two-year project. Members of this committee included representatives from Chelsea Greenspace and Recreation Committee, Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, EPA New England's Urban Environmental Program (UEP) and the Greater Boston Urban Resources Partnerships. A resident advisory committee (RAC) and a technical committee were also assembled for the project. Throughout the duration of the risk assessment, the project was connected with three academic institutions that contributed to different facets of the project, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tufts University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

The project used surveys and questionnaires to get feedback from residents. Residents also had opportunities to participate in focus groups that asked for continued input in detailing research priorities. A total of 165 Chelsea residents, 154 East Boston residents and six residents that did not specify a neighborhood, were either interviewed or surveyed. The RAC helped to identify several environmental, public health and social issues. But because of the nature of the project, the CRA could not address all of the identified issues. They voted to concentrate their efforts on ambient air quality; water quality (in the Creek); open and green space; asthma and other respiratory diseases; and noise and traffic.

A final report will be released this fall that includes recommendations to spearhead future efforts to solve the issues of concern to



Pilings, litter and various industrial storage tanks along the Chelsea Creek

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Chelsea project is a collaborative model

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Chelsea Creek and East Boston residents. There were five key findings that emerged from the research:

- Data on environment and public health issues is insufficient. At the start of the research, the prevailing thought was that there was data available but just not in a centralized, easily accessible location. It was discovered that there has been very little data gathered on any of the six priority issues on a local level. More sampling and technical assistance for communities is recommended.

- Even when local data exists, the data is often of unacceptable quality to residents. If data was available on the local level, it usually comes from industries rather than independent researchers or consultants. This caused great concern to the residents because they felt that the data would be skewed.

- Residents believe that current regulations (federal, state and local) do not adequately protect the health of urban residents or the quality of the environment. Residents felt that regulations do not address the cumulative impacts of multi-media contamination, and that information sharing between regulating bodies of government rarely occurs. It is recommended that residents do more to engage regulating agencies to work together across all levels of government to ensure proper protection of the environment and public health.

- Actions are needed from local, state and federal government agencies to address data gaps, information quality and measurable progress on issues.

- Actions are needed from local residents to hold government agencies accountable for their roles and to make improvements on issues. Residents are an essential component in encouraging government agencies to help improve issues. However, residents must take personal responsibility

for the environmental and public health impacts that result from individual actions.

The CRA is a good prototype for other communities that are interested in working with EPA New England to implement collaborative problem-solving. The CRA project has shown the importance of investing and valuing local knowledge of the community when trying to assess and address environmental and public health problems in a given community,

because the community's residents are the ones directly impacted by these issues and experience them first-hand.

For further information about the Comparative Risk Assessment, please visit <http://www.tufts.edu/tie/mwc/ChelseaCreek/> or the UEP website at <http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/uei/index.html> or contact Nerissa Wu, UEP Special Projects Coordinator, at 617-918-1312.

Office highlight: Auto industry compliance assistance in Lawrence

An assistance outreach package was mailed out during August 2002 to more than 40 auto body shops in Lawrence, Mass., a working-class community with 59.7 percent of residents identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino. EPA officials recognized the community's need for Spanish language auto industry compliance assistance materials between 2001 and 2002 while EPA New England's Urban Environmental Program worked with local officials and community groups in Lawrence.

EPA New England's Compliance Assistance Coordinator created a package that included English and newly-created Spanish versions of the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) Crash Course for Compliance and Pollution Prevention (Crash Course)—a tool to help shops achieve and go beyond compliance—and a video created by EPA Region 9 entitled, "Profit Through Prevention: Best Environmental Practices for Auto Repair."

The Crash Course program is centered around a comprehensive, plain-language guidebook produced by the OTA in 1998 in partnership with the EPA New England, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Massachusetts Auto Body Association and other agencies and organizations. The Crash Course is designed to help members of the Massachusetts collision repair industry understand and comply with the basic environmental, health and safety regulations that apply to them. The program promotes the use of pollution prevention measures as a primary means for achieving compliance.

Besides the more than 40 auto body shops in Lawrence, the package was also sent to more than 400 Massachusetts health agents and health officers so that they have tools and resources at their disposal to assist them in conducting their code inspections and assistance outreach in auto body shops throughout the state.



Awards and new application information

Micmacs receive air quality grant

The EPA announced in May that it has awarded \$290,000 to the Aroostook Band of Micmacs for an air monitoring and public education project in northern Maine. The project will monitor air quality in real time and make the data immediately available to the public on a web site and through local media. The project will also use the data to generate alerts on poor air quality days, warning susceptible populations to limit outdoor activities.

"This is a great project that passed strict internal and external scientific peer review," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator for EPA's New England office. "It's going to help give area residents better information about the air they're breathing, in a way that helps them make better decisions about their daily lives."

Project partners include EPA, the National Weather Service, the Maine Departments of Health and Environmental Protection, the Maine Lung Association, and local media and colleges.

The program will be based at the tribal housing complex just west of

Presque Isle, Maine. The program will install real-time monitors for important indicators, including nitrous oxides, sulfur oxides, carbon dioxide, fine particulate matter, ozone, ultraviolet radiation, and visibility (using a digital camera). The data will be immediately available on a public web site, and local newspapers, radio and TV stations have agreed to print and broadcast air quality updates using the project's information. A subscription will also be available to the public for e-mail alerts when air quality is poor.

Poor air quality is a particular concern for the area, as Aroostook County has one of the highest asthma rates in the country. Poor air quality affects everyone but particularly children and adults who are active outdoors, and people with respiratory diseases, such as asthma. Exposure to poor air quality can cause serious breathing problems, aggravate asthma and other pre-existing lung diseases and make people more susceptible to respiratory infection. When elevated ozone levels are expected, EPA recommends that people limit strenuous outdoor activity.

EJ Small Grant recipients announced

The EPA recently awarded four grants totaling \$70,000 to community, tribal, and non-profit groups in New England for projects promoting environmental justice. The grants, worth between \$15,000 and \$20,000, were disbursed through the Environmental Justice Small Grants (EJSG) program.

This year's grants emphasized multimedia projects and research projects. Multimedia projects address pollution in more than one environmental medium (e.g., air, water, etc.). Projects that were research-oriented and specific to hazardous substances were awarded funding under the Superfund program.

The following grants were awarded:
In Massachusetts:

The Mystic River Watershed Association in Arlington received \$19,700 for its Environmental Justice Across the Mystic project designed to raise awareness of EJ issues in the Mystic River Watershed. Three public forums will be offered through the project to disseminate environmental justice information and engage the community. Two EJ Training Collaborative workshops and one Mystic EJ Summit will be held to plan strategies for addressing EJ issues in the watershed. Summer interns will then investigate proposals raised during the EJ Summit.

In New Hampshire:

The Way Home in Manchester received \$15,000 for its ongoing Healthy Home Services Project focusing on the shortage of lead-free affordable housing in the city. The project plans to increase the

EPA and Manchester announce funding and actions to curb childhood lead poisoning

In October, the EPA and the City of Manchester, N.H., announced a series of actions aimed at reducing lead poisoning risks in apartments and houses across the city.

Flanked by families and children who have suffered from lead poisoning in the city, EPA Regional Administrator Robert W. Varney announced a \$15,000 EPA grant to support The Way Home, a nonprofit homeless prevention agency that provides lead-free housing for families in Manchester. Varney also announced enforcement actions against two New Hampshire realty companies for failing to properly notify home buyers and renters of risks from exposure to lead paint, as required by

federal law.

"While we've made progress in reducing lead poisoning threats, it's unacceptable that hundreds of children are still being exposed to lead paint each and every year," Varney said at a news conference at The Way Home.

Varney praised The Way Home for its work in educating and protecting thousands of families and children from such health hazards as lead and asthma. Earlier this year, The Way Home opened a housing resource center that provides short-term housing for families, particularly those being exposed to potential lead threats.

"The region's housing shortage has

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Awards and new application information

EJSG: Emerging tools for local problem-solving

This summer the EPA published the second edition of the Environmental Justice Small Grants report, "Emerging Tools for Local Problem-Solving." The report provides a snapshot of the best projects awarded under the Environmental Justice Small Grant Program between 1997 and 1999. Of the 71 grants highlighted in the report, nine were undertaken by

groups New England. Among them: The Committee for Boston Public Housing; The Recycling Initiative Campaign, Tellus Institute, Jobs for Youth and Alternatives for Community and Environment in Massachusetts; the Penobscot Indian Nation in Maine; the New Hampshire Citizens Alliance; Keep Providence Beautiful in Rhode Island; and the New Haven Land Trust in Connecticut.

Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting EPA New England's Environmental Justice Coordinator, Kathleen Castagna, at 617-918-1429 or Castagna.Kathleen@epa.gov or by requesting Report No. EPA/300-R-02-002 from the U.S. EPA, National Service Center for Environmental Publications, P.O. Box 42419, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

2002 EJSG awardees

continued from page 9

number of environmentally safe housing units available to low income renters in the community, with a focus on reopening, with appropriate renovations, units closed due to lead paint hazards.

In Maine:

The Penobscot Indian Nation in Old Town received \$15,300 for its project, A Strategy for Controlling Toxics in the Penobscot Nation Reservation. The project will focus on fish consumption by tribal members and water pollution, including mercury, PCBs and other pollutants in the Penobscot River. In enhancing and facilitating communication and information exchange between all stakeholders, the Penobscot Nation intends to take a lead role in developing a strategic options plan to control sources of such pollutants.

The Bayside Neighborhood Association in Portland received \$20,000 for its Lead Remediation in Urban Soils: A Community-Based Research Project to perform lead analyses on urban residential soils in the city's Bayside Neighborhood. The project will then explore techniques to extract lead from the soils using plants and inform the public of the research results.

\$1.5 million available for EJSG, deadline to apply is Dec. 18, 2002

Guidance that outlines the purpose, goals and general procedures for grant applications under the Fiscal Year 2003 Environmental Justice Small Grants Program (EJSG) is now available from all EPA regional EJ Coordinators. During FY 2003, EPA will make available about \$1.5 million in grant funds to eligible organizations, \$1 million of which will be available specifically for Superfund projects. Applications must be delivered to an EPA regional office by close of business or postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by midnight on Dec. 18, 2002.

The purpose of the grant program is to provide financial assistance to eligible community groups (i.e., community-based/grassroots organizations, churches or other nonprofit organizations with a focus on community-based issues) and federally recognized tribal governments that are working on or plan to carry out projects to address environmental justice issues. Preference for awards will be given to community-based/grassroots organizations working on local solutions to local environmental problems.

While there are many applications submitted from community groups for equally worthwhile projects, EPA is emphasizing the availability of funds for

research projects. Projects that are research-oriented and specific to hazardous substances are considered for funding available under the Superfund program. Grants are also being awarded for projects that address pollution in more than one environmental medium (e.g., air, water, etc.).

Note that all awards will be made in the form of a grant not to exceed one year, and EPA will consider only one application per applicant for a given project. Applicants may submit more than one application if the applications are for separate and distinct projects or activities. Every application will be evaluated based on the merit of the proposed project in comparison with other applications, and past performance will be considered.

The EPA expects to announce awardees in late summer 2003.

To receive a copy of the EJSG Application in both English and Spanish, contact EPA New England's regional EJ Coordinator, Kathleen Castagna, at 617-918-1429 or Castagna.Kathleen@epa.gov. You can also obtain copies of the grant guidance and other information about EJSG at www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants/ej_smgrants.html.



Awards and new application information

Whitman and Chafee announce grants in Providence

Calling children's health protection one of her most important missions, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman joined U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee in celebrating Rhode Island's efforts to protect children from environmental threats in the Woonasquatucket River and to announce three children's health grants to Rhode Island totaling nearly \$70,000.

During a morning visit to the Laurel Hill Elementary School in Providence, Whitman and Chafee listened in as 20 third-grade students learned appropriate uses of the

Woonasquatucket through a multi-media, multi-lingual "Do's and Don'ts" curriculum presented by the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District. They also joined state and local officials in announcing three grants aimed at reducing childhood lead poisoning and improving indoor air quality at schools.

Among the grants announced :

- The Northern Rhode Island Conservation District was awarded a \$29,999 grant to continue and expand its "Do's and Don'ts for the Woonasquatucket River" education campaign. The campaign, now in its fourth year, will be used to expand in-school presentations which have already reached more than 1,000 second- and third-grade students. The grant also will be used to create a tool kit that can be used in other urban watersheds and pilot the new program with the Blackstone River Watershed Council.

- The Childhood Lead Action Project received a \$25,000 grant to continue its work in reducing childhood lead poisoning in Rhode Island through citizen education, parent support and advocacy. The grant will specifically be used to expand and sustain the Rhode

Island Lead Collaborative, a two-year-old network of organizations and agencies involved in lead poisoning prevention outreach across the state.

- The Rhode Island Department of Health received a \$15,000 grant to expand the use of the agency's "Tools for Schools" indoor air quality program in



Rhode Island schools. Tools for Schools is a voluntary program to assist school officials in preventing and solving indoor air quality problems. The program kit includes a checklist for evaluating problems and

specific actions for improving air quality, including improving air ventilation, curbing mold problems, testing for radon and preventing exposure to diesel bus emissions. More than 20 schools in Rhode Island have already implemented the program. The \$15,000 is among nearly \$100,000 of grants that Rhode Island has received from EPA for Tools for Schools implementation.

Whitman also highlighted the agency's commitment to clean up the Woonasquatucket and revitalize its shorelines. The agency has spent more than \$10 million since 1999 on cleanup activities in the North Providence section of the river known as the Centredale Manor Superfund Site. EPA provided more than \$1 million to support Brownfields redevelopment efforts in Providence, including the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project to create two large riverfront parks on former industrial properties.

"The transformation that's underway on the Woonasquatucket River is really exciting and EPA is proud to be a partner in those efforts," Whitman said.

Curbing childhood lead poisoning |

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forced many low-income families to remain in older housing with deteriorating lead paint or face homelessness. To leave no child behind, we are committed to the goal of creating community partnerships involving low-income families, landlords and city officials in order to provide lead-safe housing," said Mary Sliney, Executive Director of The Way Home.

Manchester Mayor Robert Baines announced an additional \$42,000 of funding for The Way Home—funding that was made possible through an agreement between the city, the state and EPA in 1999 regarding sewer overflows in the city. The agreement required the city to spend \$500,000 on children's health programs.

"We're pleased to award \$42,000 to The Way Home to continue its lead poisoning and asthma prevention services to Manchester," Mayor Baines said. "This work is important to the city's goal of being home to healthy families in a healthy community environment."

EPA also recently proposed fines against two New Hampshire realty companies—\$33,892 against Senecal Properties and \$13,200 against Lacerte Realty—for failing to notify home buyers and renters of risks from exposure to lead-paint. The initiative has included more than 80 inspections around New England as well as compliance assistance workshops.

Low-level lead poisoning is widespread among U.S. children, affecting as many as three million children under the age of six. In Manchester alone, 173 of 2,238 children who were screened last year—7.7 percent—had elevated blood lead levels, according to the New Hampshire Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. That is double the statewide rate of 3.8 percent.

Researchers have determined that children are especially susceptible to lead poisoning due to a higher probability of ingestion of lead paint particles. Elevated lead levels can trigger learning disabilities, decreased growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing and even brain damage.



Awards and new application information

EPA awards \$100,000 for environmental job training in Boston and New Bedford

EPA New England awarded supplemental funding under the Brownfields Job Training and



Students from New Bedford learn about hazardous waste.

Development Demonstration Pilots program. Jobs for Youth in Boston and New Directions in

New Bedford each received \$50,000 grants. The grants will be used to train residents in procedures for handling and removing hazardous substances. The agency made grants totaling \$750,000 across the country.

“Brownfields can spur the economy,” said Robert W. Varney, EPA New England Regional Administrator. “These grants will go a long way to ensuring that there is a trained work force ready to take on the work of cleaning up these sites and getting them back into productive use.”

This is the second round of supplemental Brownfields job training pilot grants to be awarded (the first round was in May). The

goals of the pilots are to facilitate cleanup of Brownfields sites contaminated with hazardous substances and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field. Brownfields are abandoned, idled or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Since 1993, the EPA Brownfields program has provided over \$200 million in assessment, revolving loan fund cleanup and job training grants, resulting in over \$3.2 billion in public and private investments leveraged and over 14,000 cleanup and redevelopment jobs generated.

New Brownfields Cleanup Grant and other Brownfields grants applications due in December

The new Brownfields Law, passed earlier this year, authorized a new and improved Brownfields Grants Program. The law broadens the definition of a brownfield, creates a new Cleanup Grant Program, and will expand the use of funds to assess and clean up petroleum-contaminated sites. The Notice of Funding Availability announcing the new program was published in the Federal Register in mid-October, and applications are due on Dec. 16 for funding in summer 2003.

Brownfields are typically under-utilized or abandoned parcels of land, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which is complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant. This includes “relatively

low-risk” petroleum sites and mine-scarred lands. Sites not eligible for funding include Superfund National Priorities List sites, federal facilities and sites which are the subject of court order or decree.



LeLachur Park in Lowell, MA is a former Brownfield site.

There are four competitive Brownfields grant programs—the Assessment Grant Program, the Cleanup Grant Program, the Cleanup

Revolving Loan Fund Grant Program and the Job Training Grant Program—with most providing funding of up to \$200,000 per eligible entity. The Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Grant Program funds up to \$1,000,000 per eligible entity to capitalize on a revolving loan fund.

Units of government are eligible to apply for all Brownfields grants, while certain non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for Cleanup Grants and Job Training Grants. Private entities and individuals are not eligible to receive grants from EPA.

For more information on all of the Brownfields Grants visit EPA New England’s brownfields website at <http://www.epa.gov/region01/brownfields/index.html> or call Lynne Jennings at 617-918-1210.

Q & A

EJ-related concerns in Boston's Chinatown explained

Selected questions and answers from the Campaign to Protect Chinatown's English and Cantonese fact sheets on EJ-related problems

Residents of Boston's Chinatown neighborhood, who are primarily Cantonese-speaking immigrants, are receiving environmental justice information in their own language thanks to a Campaign to Protect Chinatown (CPC) project that was funded by EPA New England grants. CPC recently began distributing multilingual fact sheets on a variety of environmental justice issues to Chinatown residents, most of whom have not completed high school, 28 percent of whom live below federal poverty and the majority of whom are non-English speakers. The CPC's multilingual environmental curriculum modules were developed using \$40,000 in grants from EPA New England's Urban Environmental and Environmental Justice Programs.

The English and Cantonese fact sheets present answers to a variety of questions about environmental justice; the role of government agencies; asthma and air pollution; construction waste and dust; motor vehicle exhaust; noise pollution from traffic and construction; air pollution in the home; lead poisoning and integrated pest management. The questions and answers below were selected from the CPC's nine Environmental Health in Chinatown fact sheets.

What is environmental justice?

Environmental justice means that all people should have equal access to clean air, water, housing conditions and open space. Often, environmental justice is an effort to make low-income and minority communities more clean and livable.

Why is environmental justice important in Chinatown?

Living in Chinatown means living next to the Combat Zone and two of the busiest roads in

Massachusetts. The traffic is always bad and construction is constant. Both cause air pollution. Asthma can be a result from living in a highly polluted area. One in six students at the Josiah Quincy Elementary school have asthma.

In addition, living in Chinatown is becoming more expensive. Longtime residents are forced to move out while people with higher incomes are moving in.



A Chinatown resident activist depicted on one of CPC's fact sheets. Photo courtesy of Sand T.

Is anyone doing anything about environmental justice in Chinatown?

The Campaign to Protect Chinatown addresses environmental justice in Chinatown. CPC designs and teaches workshops for Chinatown residents about the environment. CPC collects information on noise, motor vehicle counts at intersections and motor-vehicle-related injuries to support resident complaints about the traffic, construction and noise that affect their daily living.

What can I do?

You can attend [the CPC] workshops. You can learn about environmental justice and give this information to others in your community. When there is a community or public meeting, you can speak out about Environmental Justice and mention the issues in the

workshop to support your concerns. Also, you can contact the CPC to learn more.

Is asthma a problem in Chinatown?

There are more than 100 children, or one out of six, at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School in Chinatown who have asthma. Because they have asthma, they may be more likely to have breathing problems when the ozone level is high.

What about construction in Chinatown?

A resident living next to a construction site in Chinatown said, "I cannot open windows because of dirt flying in. I no longer have fresh air. Because of the dirt, I was hospitalized in January, February and the entire month of March...It is now necessary for me to wear a mask."

Boston's Chinatown has a lot of construction. The "Big Dig," which borders Chinatown, is the largest construction project in the United States. There are also several construction projects at almost any time and there are many more construction projects planned for the future. It is likely that construction will be a concern for Chinatown for a long time to come.

What do we know about exhaust in Chinatown?

A 65-year-old Chinese resident explained that traffic on Tremont Street is as bad at night as during the day. The Campaign to Protect Chinatown did a survey of people living in Chinatown. One out of three residents said that they were bothered by exhaust while in their apartment. Two out of three residents said they were bothered by exhaust while outdoors. People who said that they were bothered by exhaust were also more likely to report health symptoms. There are a

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Q&A

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lot of cars, trucks, buses and construction vehicles in Chinatown. The exhaust from these vehicles adds to the amount of air pollution in the Chinatown community.

What causes noise pollution in Chinatown and will it affect my hearing or health?

Chinatown has a lot of noise. Cars, trucks, buses and airplanes cause noise. On construction sites there are a lot of machines that cause noise. CPC measured noise levels around Chinatown on the morning of Sept. 22, 2000. Each location we measured had a higher noise level than the city standard.

Very loud noise over years of exposure can cause hearing loss. The noise of heavy trucks when you are on the sidewalk next to them is near the level of noise that can cause hearing loss. Most of the noise in Chinatown is below the level that will cause hearing loss. However, it can cause other health effects.

Some scientists think that noise pollution can increase blood pressure and the risk of heart disease. They also believe that it can increase anxiety and decrease how well children do at school. Noise can wake you from sleep. It is stressful to live around a lot of noise.

Is there air pollution in my home and what are the health effects?

Indoor air pollution includes gas fumes from stoves and heaters. Many household cleaners and new carpets contain toxic chemicals. Secondhand smoke from tobacco pollutes the air. Most people spend a lot of time at home so indoor air pollution can be a serious concern.

Exhaust and secondhand smoke can affect people who have asthma or other breathing problems. Some



A Chinatown mural portrays residents' search for justice. Photo courtesy of Sand T.

chemicals can increase the risk of cancer. If a stove or heater is poorly maintained, carbon monoxide, a deadly air, can pollute the air.

Are Chinatown residents at risk of lead poisoning?

Although lead poisoning appears to be less common in Chinatown compared to other parts of Boston, Chinatown had six children reported to be poisoned by lead from 1998-2000. Anyone can get lead poisoning, but children are affected more than adults. People living in older building are at greater risk.

Are pests a problem in Chinatown?

In 1999, the Boston Inspectional Service Department shut down a restaurant in Chinatown after finding mice. The owner hired a pest control company that removed and controlled garbage as well as using pesticides. The restaurant was then allowed to reopen.

Yes, pests are a problem in Chinatown. Trash, especially rotten food, is too often left on the street or in open containers. In general restaurants will attract cockroaches and mice.

Besides being unpleasant, pests may cause people with asthma to have trouble breathing. They can also carry diseases.

What can I do?

If you feel that air pollution, construction waste and dust, motor vehicle exhaust, noise pollution, indoor air pollution, lead poisoning and pests are problems in Chinatown, speak out! You can attend a meeting of the Chinatown Resident Association or a hearing held by the City of Boston. Many of these problems will only be solved if many people become involved and work to change it.

CPC's fact sheet on The Role of Government Agencies noted that both the Boston Office of Environmental Health and the EPA have Chinese-speaking persons who are willing to assist residents in their native language. The Boston Office of Environmental Health has Chinese-speaking persons answering their phone from 9 a.m until noon on Mondays and Fridays, while the EPA has identified Cantonese and Toisanese-speaking employees that are willing to answer residents' questions. To request copies of this list of important phone numbers or any of the environmental education fact sheets, contact Sherry Hao of the Campaign to Protect Chinatown at 617-426-0643 or ehc@protectchinatown.org.

Legislative Updates



NECCO settlement protects new Revere plant site

The EPA announced in August that the New England Confectionery Company (NECCO) will undertake a \$160,000 environmental project and pay a \$27,000 fine to settle a complaint regarding violations of clean air regulations. According to the complaint, the company failed to adequately plan for preventing and controlling accidental releases of ammonia from its Cambridge facility.

"This facility is in a very dense urban neighborhood, so it's particularly important that there be a good system for preventing hazardous chemical releases," said Robert W. Varney, Regional Administrator for EPA's New England Office. "The good news is that this settlement means NECCO will be going beyond what's required to make their new facility safe and clean."

NECCO uses liquid ammonia as a refrigerant in air conditioning and cooling equipment. A major release of ammonia from the facility could have health impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and/or lead to temporary evacuation. The facility is located near residences, a subway station, a community college, a shopping mall, a school and a science museum. This facility had small accidental releases of ammonia in 1995 and 2000.

The federal Clean Air Act requires that companies with large amounts of hazardous chemicals on site to file risk management plans with EPA. The threshold amount for ammonia is 10,000 pounds. According to the complaint, the risk management

plan filed by NECCO in June 1999 lacked several important components, and an EPA audit and compliance inspection in December 2000 confirmed that several elements of the plan were not being implemented at the plant.

NECCO is in the process of relocating to a new facility in Revere. Under the settlement,

NECCO will pay a \$26,910 penalty and will design and install an ammonia diffusion system in the Revere facility. The system, valued at approximately \$160,000, will reduce the risks of releases of ammonia. Since the inspection, NECCO has improved its risk management systems at the Cambridge plant.

New Massachusetts EJ policy

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meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

The new policy identifies several services that will be undertaken by all EOEA agencies to help potentially sensitive populations that are most at risk of being unaware or unable to participate in environmental decision-making.

With senior-level commitment, EOEA will establish regional outreach teams. Teams will meet with local residents to discuss related community issues, as well as provide feedback on EOEA's effectiveness. EOEA agencies are also responsible for developing public participation programs provide for translation of public notes and interpreters at public meetings.

Under the policy, impacted EJ neighborhoods be a priority for compliance and enforcement assistance. Enhanced analysis of all

environmental impacts will be required through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act to ensure that targeted communities are not disproportionately affected by future sources of pollution.

Noting that Brownfield sites are concentrated in many urban communities, EOEA's new policy focuses on redeveloping these contaminated sites in to help drive community revitalization. EOEA has allotted \$1 million for the sole purpose of identifying, tracking and cleaning Brownfield sites in urban communities.

Lastly, the state plans to develop a statewide mapping system to track EJ populations, as well as potential pollution sources that impact EJ neighborhoods. EOEA plans to update maps as new census data is released.

The new EJ policy is the product of the Community Preservation Initiative, a four-year effort by EOEA to preserve and protect the natural resources of the Commonwealth.



LU cont.

Settlement with RIPTA requires use of diesel reduction technologies

continued from page 1

assessments on many of its waste streams and had even been throwing some of its hazardous waste in the trash, including cans containing solvents and contaminated rags. EPA inspectors also found that RIPTA failed to properly label and date waste containers, manage hazardous waste to minimize the potential for release, and ship hazardous waste off site within 90 days as required.

RIPTA violated the Clean Water Act by failing to have an adequate oil spill prevention plan and violated the Clean Air Act by failing to retrofit 20 of its pre-1994 buses with required catalytic converters designed to reduce diesel emissions by 25 percent. This retrofit was required under the Urban Bus Retrofit Rule when the transit authority rebuilt the engines on those buses.

"This summer's poor air quality is an unfortunate reminder that air pollution still persists in New England and that we must be diligent in ensuring compliance with our environmental laws," said Robert W. Varney, Regional Administrator of EPA's New England Office. "This agreement with RIPTA is a significant step in the right direction. The use of cleaner fuels and cleaner buses in RIPTA's fleet will contribute greatly to improving Rhode Island's air quality."

In September, EPA completed the Health Assessment Document for Diesel Engine Exhaust. The assessment concluded that short-term exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung irritation and other inflammatory symptoms and that long-term exposure is likely to pose a lung cancer hazard to humans as well as other forms of lung damage. The document can be downloaded from <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recorddisplay.cfm?deid=29060>.



EPA cites 11 bus fleet operators for idling violations at Logan airport

The EPA announced in August that it has issued notices of violation to 10 companies and Massport for violating clean air regulations by idling buses for excessive periods of time – in one case nearly four hours. All the violations were observed at Logan Airport this summer. Violators of the regulation face possible penalties of up to \$27,500 per violation.

The notices of violation are part of a New England-wide effort by EPA to curb diesel air emissions, particularly in inner city neighborhoods where diesel air pollution and asthma rates are substantially higher than in other parts of the region. EPA is working closely in Boston with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the City of Boston to educate companies and drivers about the anti-idling law. The notices of violation at Logan follow a notice of violation issued in July to the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority for excessive idling at its bus yards.

"Too many children, especially in our urban areas, suffer from the health effects of diesel exhaust," said Robert W. Varney, Regional Administrator for EPA's New England Office. "Bus idling is an easily avoided source of pollution. Bus operators and transit companies can help protect public health by taking steps to limit idling."

EPA inspectors made observations at Logan International Airport on four occasions, between June 25 and July 7, finding 38 instances of buses idling longer than 5 minutes, averaging half an hour of idling per

bus. In one case, a bus was observed idling for nearly four hours.

Notices of violation were issued to: Alamo Car Rental, Budget Car Rental, Concord Trailways, Flight Line, Inc., Fox Bus Lines, Hertz Corporation, Massachusetts Port Authority, McGinn Bus Co., National Car Rental, Paul Revere Transportation, and the Plymouth and Brockton Street Railway Co. Some of the companies are contractors operating Logan Express buses.

Massport was cited for a single instance of a compressed natural gas power bus idling; all other companies were cited for one or more diesel or gasoline buses.

Diesel exhaust contains fine particles (known as PM2.5 or 'soot'), smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx), and various toxic chemicals such as aldehydes (formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acrolein), benzene, 1,3-butadiene, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

In New England, diesel engines are the third largest human-made source of fine particles, contributing more than 20 percent of emissions. Fine particles can cause lung damage and aggravate respiratory conditions, such as asthma and bronchitis. Children are more sensitive to air pollution because they breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults. Recent studies have found a strong correlation between exposure to diesel exhaust and impaired lung growth in children.

On several days surrounding the EPA's observations, the Boston area had

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EPA and U.S. Attorney announce \$3 million settlement that will improve air quality and the environment in Boston

Idling violations cont.

continued from page 16

On Oct. 29, United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan and Robert W. Varney, Regional Administrator of the EPA's New England office, announced a settlement with a Boston trash hauler, Allied Waste Systems, Inc. ("Allied") which resolves the government's claims that Allied violated the Clean Air Act.

The proposed Consent Decree requires the company to pay a \$782,550 civil penalty and spend \$2.3 million on an environmental project that will improve Boston's air quality at Allied's Howard Transfer Station in Roxbury. A civil complaint was also filed simultaneously with the Consent Decree.

The settlement stems from violations of provisions of the Clean Air Act that are intended to protect the stratospheric ozone layer from the harmful effects of certain chemicals, known as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). These chemicals, commonly found in coolants, are known to cause the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer, which protects the earth's surface from harmful ultraviolet radiation. Under EPA regulations, waste haulers who dispose of household appliances which may contain CFCs or HCFCs, including refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners, must take steps to ensure that these chemicals are not released to the atmosphere.

"The agreement is indicative of EPA's strong commitment to improve environmental conditions in urban areas, especially communities such as Roxbury which has among the highest asthma rates in the state," said Varney.

According to the civil complaint, between July 1997 and August 1998, Allied compacted or crushed discarded appliances collected under the trash pick-up contract with the City of Boston, without either recovering any remaining refrigerant from the

appliances or verifying that the refrigerant was previously evacuated from the appliances. Upon learning of EPA's inspections, Allied corrected the improper disposal practice.

U.S. Attorney Sullivan noted that a similar enforcement case against Waste Management of Massachusetts, Inc., also involving improper handling of CFCs and HCFCs, was settled and announced in April of this year.

"My office will continue aggressively to enforce the federal statutes that protect our environment," said U.S. Attorney Sullivan. "The Earth's ozone layer protects us all from harmful solar rays that can cause skin cancer, and the Clean Air Act is an essential tool in protecting the ozone layer. Waste haulers across the country must strictly comply with the federal ozone protection requirements."

In addition to requiring payment of a substantial civil penalty, the Consent Decree requires Allied to spend at least \$2.3 million on a Supplemental Environmental Project as described below; to comply with Section 608(c) of the Clean Air Act; to conduct appropriate training of employees who are engaged in activities concerning the collection and disposal of appliances; and to implement a tracking system for all appliances picked up by Allied in the City of Boston in order to ensure future compliance with the regulatory requirements.

The Supplemental Environmental Project involves the construction of a new building at Allied's Roxbury transfer station and the installation of state-of-the-art emissions control technology capable of reducing dust, odors and volatile organic compounds. This will improve aesthetics and provide for more efficient waste transfer operations.

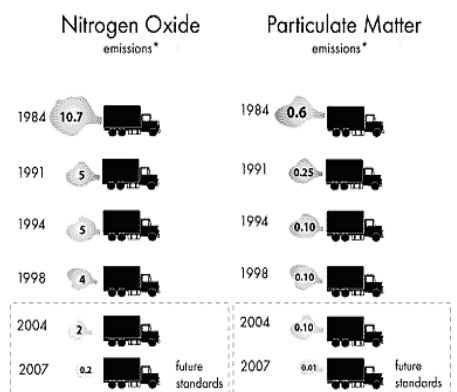
The case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney George Henderson in Sullivan's Civil Division and Thomas Olivier, EPA Regional Counsel.

significant air quality problems, including elevated ozone and PM2.5 levels.

The Massachusetts anti-idling regulation prohibits engine idling while the vehicle is stopped for a foreseeable period of time in excess of five minutes (with exceptions for activities such as maintenance and operating auxiliary equipment such as delivery lifts). Penalties for violating this regulation can be as high as \$27,500 per day per violation (this amount increased to \$31,500 for violations after August 19). There is a statutory 30-day waiting period after the notices of violations before any fines can be imposed.

EPA is also working aggressively with the six New England states to implement anti-idling programs, with a particular emphasis on school buses. In May, EPA New England and the New England Asthma Regional Council issued idling guidelines for school bus operators. And earlier this year, as a result of an EPA case enforcement against Waste Management of Massachusetts, the company will provide ultra low sulfur diesel fuel for 200 diesel school buses operated by the Boston public schools and new air filter traps for approximately 110 of those buses.

EPA Standards for New Trucks and Buses



* EPA's emission standards for trucks and buses are based on the amount of pollution emitted per unit of energy (expressed in grams per brake horsepower hour).

For more information on diesel exhaust and anti-idling guidelines, visit EPA's web site at <http://www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel>.

Upcoming EJ events

NOVEMBER

November 18 - 20

EJ Awareness Training
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Nov. 18 or 19, and 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 20
Location: EPA New England Office
1 Congress St. Boston, MA
EPA employees use START system; others please call 617-918-1703

November 19

Boston Bar Association discussion on new MA EJ Policy
12:30 p.m.
Location: 16 Beacon St. Boston, MA
<http://www.bostonbar.org/sc/ev/index.htm>

November 20

"Moving Forward: Environmental Protection for All"
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: EPA Headquarters,
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington, DC

November 20 - 21

Working Effectively with Tribal governments
8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Location: EPA New England Office
1 Congress St. Boston, MA
Register through START

November 22

Moderate Risk Deleading Training
Various times
Location: Boston Public Health Commission
1010 Massachusetts Ave. 2nd floor Boston, MA
www.state.ma.us/dph/clppp/TRAINPRO.HTM

(Who Counts? cont.)

University Boston, MA
Aliya Quraishi, Symposium Coordinator
aliya_quraishi@hotmail.com

December 9 - 12

18th NEJAC Meeting
12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Marriot Hotel at Inner Harbor
110 South Eutaw St. Baltimore, MD
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/nejac/next_meeting.html

December 10

EJ Awareness Training
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Location: EPA New England Regional Lab
11 Technology Dr. Chelmsford, MA
EPA employees use START system; others please call 617-918-1703

December 16

Brownfields grants initial proposals due
Postmarked by close of business
Location: EPA New England Office
Mail code HIO
1 Congress St., Boston, MA 02114-2023
Attn: Lynne Jennings

December 18

EJ grants applications due
Postmarked by close of business
Location: EPA New England Office
1 Congress St., Boston, MA 02114-2023
Mail code RAA
Attn: Kathleen Castagna

JANUARY

January 21 - 22

EJ Awareness Training
8:30 a.m.-5 p.m on Jan.21, and 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on Jan. 22.
Location: EPA New England Office
1 Congress St. Boston, MA
EPA employees use START system; others please call 617-918-1703

DECEMBER

December 6

Who Counts? The Classification and Application of Race and Ethnicity
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Location: Curry Student Center Northeastern

External links disclaimer

This newsletter provides links to non-EPA websites. These links provide additional information that may be useful or interesting and are being provided consistent with the intended purpose of this newsletter. However, EPA cannot attest to the accuracy of the information provided by linked sites. Providing links to a non-EPA website does not constitute an endorsement by EPA or any of its employees of the sponsors of this site or the information or products presented on the site.



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Web Resources:

EPA New England Environmental Justice Program website

<http://www.epa.gov/region1/steward/ejprog/index.html>

National Office of Environmental Justice

<http://es.epa.gov/oeca/main/ej/index.html>

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

<http://es.epa.gov/oeca/main/ej/nejac/index.html>

National Office of Civil Rights

<http://www.epa.gov/ocrpage1/aboutocr.htm>